

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 218517

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HOLD FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, MPOL

SUBJECT: MARITIME EXERCISE INFORMATION GROUP (MEIG)

REF: A) USNATO 8568 DTG 081521Z SEP 77

B) USNATO 7352 DTG 291736Z JUL 77

C) USNATO 0308 DTG 191903Z JAN 77

D) STATE 169761 DTG 202242Z JUL 77

E) STATE 136972 DTG 140129Z JUN 77

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 218517

F) STATE 107920 DTG 122139Z MAY 77

G) STATE 057394 DTG 152018Z MAR 77

H) STATE 020464 DTG 290042Z JAN 77

1. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES GUIDANCE REQUESTED BY REFTEL A.
AS SUGGESTED BY REFTEL B, WE HAVE REASSESSED US POSITION
ON MEIG INITIATIVE.

2. IN REF H, WE PROPOSED THAT MEIG COME UNDER AEGIS OF CINCEASTLANT AS SACLANT'S REPRESENTATIVE. AS YOU CORRECTLY POINT OUT IN REFERENCE B, THIS DID NOT SUPPORT A CHANGE FROM THE BASIC MILITARY COMMITTEE DECISION, MC232, WHICH SPECIFIES THAT GROUP WILL BE CHAIRED BY CINCHAN.

3. RATHER THAN ANY CHANGE IN EMPHASIS, WE HAVE VIEWED

SUBSEQUENT GUIDANCE AS ELABORATION ON, AND EXPLANATION OF, WASHINGTON POSITION REGARDING PROPOSED ORIENTATION OF MEIG. SPECIFICALLY, GUIDANCE IN REFTEL E REFLECTED CONCERN OVER UTILITY OF ORGANIZATION LACKING ANY DEFINITE GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF ITS CHAIRMAN AND TO WHOM HE WOULD REPORT.

4. WE CAN APPRECIATE POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES UNDERLYING DESIRE TO ADOPT PROPOSED CHAIRMANSHIP FORMULATION SINCE SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD MAKE MEIG MORE ACCEPTABLE TO SOME ALLIES BY FURTHER WEAKENING GROUP'S LINK TO NATO. HOWEVER, AS PROPOSED FORMULATION IN PO/77/80 FOR MEIG CHAIRMANSHIP IS UNACCEPTABLE TO US, ISSUE IS OF SOME SENSITIVITY TO US AUTHORITIES. CREATING AN ACTIVITY SO LOOSELY DEFINED SETS UNDESIRABLE PRECEDENT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 218517

5. WERE IT NOT FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP ISSUE, PO/77/80 WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. IT CONTAINS AMPLE CAVEATS PRECLUDING CHANGES IN NATO POLICY OR FURTHER ACCEPTANCE OF ANY ADDITIONAL MARITIME COMMITMENTS. WE NOTE THAT PARA 3 OF THE PO IS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES PERTAINING TO OUT-OF-AREA OPERATIONS AND EMPHASIZES THAT THE GROUP WILL ONLY BE CONCERNED WITH DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL NATIONS' NORMAL PEACETIME ACTIVITIES. IN OUR JUDGMENT, PARA 3 AND OTHER WORDING THROUGHOUT THE PO SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO ALLAY GOVERNMENT FEARS EXPRESSED BY SOME ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES.

6. IN SUM, WHILE WE WOULD DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN MEIG, OUR REVIEW INDICATES THERE IS NO COMPELLING REASON TO CHANGE OUR POSITION REGARDING MILITARY CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP. MISSION SHOULD CONTINUE TO DRAW ON GUIDANCE FURNISHED BY REF E.

FYI. WE APPRECIATE EXTENSIVE MISSION EFFORTS TO KEEP THIS ISSUE MOVING TOWARD AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION.

HOWEVER, EVEN IF MEIG CAME INTO EXISTENCE, WE WOULD
CONTINUE IN OUR INCLINATION TO RELY ON EXISTING MECHANISMS
WHICH CURRENTLY PROVIDE MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL
EXCHANGES OF MARITIME INFORMATION. WE RECOGNIZE THAT OUR
POSITION COULD RESULT IN NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEIG
AND MAY, THEREFORE, PROVE AWKWARD. IN ANY EVENT, WE HOPE
THAT MEIG ISSUE WOULD NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT ON OTHER,
IMPORTANT ON-GOING EFFORTS, END FYI.

7. THIS IS A JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE. VANCE

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